

## **Permanent Supportive Housing Narrative**

- a.** Describe the type of coordinated entry being utilized in your Region (e.g. single point of contact, hotline etc.) and the role your project plays in its implementation. Include in your description: the method of client contact (e.g. in person, 211 etc.); the hours of the day that individuals may access the system; and how your project coordinates within the Region to provide a coherent and accessible system.

The Beacon House is staffed 24 hours per day 7 days per week and is a drop inn center for the community. Many chronically homeless persons access the drop inn center on a daily basis and are provided with on-site assistance to obtain housing and housing resources. As the only Safe Haven in the State of Ohio, Beacon House, was implemented with a Housing First model and works with all persons “where they are”. Staff from Beacon House are in ongoing communication with the shelter, emergency room, and police departments regarding persons who may be appropriate for Beacon House. Beacon House staff are very familiar with coordinated entry and work with all other key stakeholders in the community to assist persons at the drop in center to access other resources.

- b.** Explain how your program aligns with the goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2016. Refer to local Point-in-Time count data as well as other current local data for the number of chronically homeless persons in your community. Will this project serve chronically homeless individuals or families? Indicate how beds will be targeted or designated for chronically homeless individuals or families, if beds are not targeted or designated please explain why.

The ten (10) beds at the Beacon House continue to be an important resource for Jefferson County in doing our part in ending chronic homelessness by 2016. This project remains a high priority for our community, especially in light of our 2014 homeless count. According to the 2014 Point-In-Time-Count conducted by the Jefferson County Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, there was a total of 66 homeless households living in emergency and transitional housing placements within Jefferson County. The local community continues to have a limited number of available permanent supportive housing units, coupled with the lack of available emergency housing units. Our local PHA is operating at a 99.8% occupancy rate and the current waiting time to receive a Housing Choice Voucher is 4 years.

The Beacon House has served the chronically homeless with a severe mental illness since the year 2006. This population is often difficult to engage and presents many inherent challenges in order to become successful in permanent housing placements. However, Coleman Professional Services, as the operator of the program brings the expertise of staff and services that can be accessed and implemented to end the chronic cycle of homeless for this target population in Jefferson County. The Beacon House offers 10 permanent supportive housing beds, which directly aligns with HUD’s priority policy since 2005. The ten (10) beds will continue to be prioritized to serve the chronically homeless in this community. The centralized intake assessment gathers information about length of homelessness and number of episodes so these cases can be put at the top of the list as a priority. Since August of 2013 the Beacon House Outreach worker has assessed 43 homeless individuals with 12 of those identifies as chronically homeless. Of those 43 individuals we were able to place 28% of those households in

permanent housing options. 39% of those households we were not able to locate upon follow-up and 16% remain open cases on our outreach caseload still homeless and living at the local shelter.

- c. Describe how the agency verifies that persons served by the program are homeless, have a disability and are at or below 35% of Area Median Income upon entry into the program.

Coleman Professional Services provides each referred person with an eligibility packet that includes an homeless verification definitions and documentation requirements, a statement of disability verification form and a income verification form that all must be completed by appropriate staff in order for persons to be considered for the Beacon House.

- d. Describe the project's target population and why persons are appropriate for permanent supportive housing. Provide data demonstrating that the project targets homeless persons with disabilities, including mental illness, chemical dependency, AIDs/HIV, related diseases, or serious permanent physical disabilities.

The target population for Beacon House has always been and will continue to serve chronically homeless persons with a severe and persistent mental health disorder. Some persons may also have a co-occurring disorder that includes a substance use issue. Beacon House is the only Safe Haven in the Balance of State and has operated to providing housing and supports to those who can be most challenging. Since Beacon House also provides a drop inn center, staff are able to work toward engagement with persons accessing the drop inn center and assist them with accessing resources and entitlements in the community while encouraging them to seek assistance with their mental health and substance use issues. Coleman Professional Services has been providing permanent supportive housing for over 25 years with the target population always involving homeless persons with a severe and persistent mental health disorder. Eliminating homeless is one of Coleman's three (3) main visionary goals for the organization.

- e. Describe the program's strategy and programming for ensuring that households remain in their housing or move to other appropriate permanent housing. Include a description of the services offered with an emphasis on case referral/coordination – being a rural and suburban County.

The Beacon House Safe Haven program consists of ten (10) single furnished apartments with bathrooms that can accommodate one single adult. The residents provide their own meals and have access to laundry facilities on site. The program also provides for common areas so that residents may prepare and have meals together as well as living areas to watch television, movies or enjoy various recreational activities. The location of the Beacon House is directly on the bus line and is within 1.0 mile of the basic community resources. Within one mile of the site there are convenience stores, financial institutions, a pharmacy and medical offices. These conveniences near the location make it perfect for the tenants to easily access the resources they need. The Beacon House is very committed to ensuring that the tenants remain in their housing or move to other more appropriate permanent housing in the community. In calendar year 2014 100% of program participants met their housing stability goal and 100% of those

who left the Beacon House went onto permanent housing placements. These types of outcomes are accomplished because the Beacon House gives tenants the opportunity to address individual housing retention and recovery goals with the support of 24 hour staff and on and off site supportive services. Uniquely the program houses the employment specialist on site, which allows for easy access to a wide array of vocational and educational services. The residents, if they so desire, can be involved in supportive services to learn and acquire the necessary skills to make their housing successful both at the Beacon House and when they choose to move on.

Supportive services are a coordinated effort between the tenant, property management staff, and service providers. A meeting is held to develop the plan together. Supportive Services available are the following:

Crisis Intervention: Coleman Professional Services will be available 24 hours for emergency response and will provide direct assistance with, psychiatric emergencies. Coleman staff will notify and coordinate with property management in such cases, and will provide ongoing monitoring of critical incidents.

Individual and Group Mental Health Counseling: Referrals to either group or individual counseling will be made after the initial intake is completed and initial treatment goals are developed.

Substance Abuse Counseling Services: Referrals to appropriate de-tox facilities or assessment with local providers will be completed per the request of the tenants, facilitation of residential treatment, linkage to medication assisted clinics follow-up, counseling, peer group support, and connection to AA programs will all be arranged by the case manager when appropriate.

Transportation Aid : Coleman Professional Services will assist the residents in negotiating public transportation system as needed for work, school, or recreation and provide transport to places not accessible by public transportation, or as indicated by status of individual's physical or mental health. Coleman will transport residents to primary health care appointments when no other options are available.

Case Management: Coleman Professional Services will provide the monitoring, direct interventions and comprehensive service coordination for high-risk or high-needs families and individuals through referral and advocacy with appropriate community agencies. Coleman staff will accompany residents to appointments if indicated and assist residents with participation in and/or organization of substance free activities as directed by their recovery plan.

Pharmacological Services: All residents can receive a psychiatric evaluation and consultation by Coleman Professional Services' psychiatrists if it is determined that medication could benefit their symptoms.

Employment Services: Referrals and help with enrollment in jobs and skills training programs will be provided by Coleman Professional Services staff. Coleman will assist with employment applications, preparations for interviews (including role playing), job development, job placement, coaching and follow along services as necessary.

Case coordination and referrals are handled by the case management staff. They assist the residents in accessing the services needed to help them achieve residential stability, a stable source of income, health care and skills needed for them to move on to permanent housing placements. The case manager advocates for the resident when needed and meets weekly with the project staff to discuss ongoing needs and possible referrals.

The Beacon House is permanent housing so there are no set maximum time limits for residents in the program. However, from the day the lease is signed, staff work with the resident to determine what services and resources they may need to be connected to in order for them to one day move from the Safe Haven into a less supervised permanent housing option. Staff accomplish this by developing a housing plan with the resident that includes resources such as employment services, literacy trainings, educational opportunities, housing subsidy programs, benefits and entitlements, and self-help groups. This process is individualized for each resident and the pace at which this goal is pursued will be decided by the resident. This exit plan is reviewed annually at the time of the renewal of the lease.

f. Indicate whether your project includes the following Housing First Core elements:

- Admission/tenant screening and selection practices that promote the acceptance of applicants regardless of their sobriety or use of substances, completion of treatment, and participation in services.

YES. Coleman Professional Services uses a Harm Reduction approach, refers potential residents to the appropriate levels of care, works to engage them in recovery, but receiving services is not mandatory.

- Applicants are seldom rejected on the basis of poor credit or financial history, poor or lack of rental history, minor criminal convictions, or behaviors that indicate a lack of "housing readiness."

This is an accurate assessment of how Coleman works with rental management to ensure this type of previous history will not exclude a potential resident from accessing Beacon House. Beacon House staff and rental management discuss all potential residents and work in partnership toward working through any previous history that may appear challenging. Housing staff have resources to assist with back balances, etc.

- Housing accepts referrals directly from shelters, street outreach, drop-in centers, and other parts of crisis response system frequented by vulnerable people experiencing homelessness.

While many of our clients and potential are referred to Coleman Professional Services through these channels, and through the drop inn center, clients/tenants also report being referred to Beacon House by word of mouth. Referrals are always accepted and each person is scheduled to meet with the Housing Specialist to work with the potential resident on the best place to live given their needs and desires. Coleman can complete intakes and treatment plans in the

same day. If a client is homeless at intake Coleman staff will work to find shelter/emergency housing or another housing solution that day.

- Supportive services emphasize engagement and problem-solving over therapeutic goals. Services plans are highly tenant-driven without predetermined goals. Participation in services or program compliance is not a condition of permanent supportive housing tenancy.

Participation in services or program compliance is not a condition of permanent supportive housing tenancy. The program promotes independence, recovery and wellbeing. Recovery is a deeply personal and often private process of overcoming the impact of a psychiatric illness despite its continued presence. Coleman uses evidence based practices to engage people in recovery and to facilitate the recovery process, but no participation in services is required for tenancy.

- g.** Explain how your request for funds is reasonable based on need, request per housing unit, etc. Agencies requesting significantly more funds from OCD than they received in the past must demonstrate an increased need for Homeless Program funds based on program expansion, increased utilization of the program, etc. Applicants for programs that have not previously been funded under this activity by OCD should contact OCD at (614) 466-2285 for guidance in determining an appropriate request amount.

The Beacon House provides housing for chronically homeless mentally ill adults who may find it difficult to secure housing. With only one adult shelter and one family shelter in this community it is very difficult to secure housing options for this population. There are several reasons that the Beacon House Project remains a high priority for this community. In 2014 the Point-In-Time Count identified 66 households' homeless households living in emergency and transitional housing placements within Jefferson County. Due to the high percentage of individuals and families living in poverty along with a declining labor force place high demands on the limited supply of safe affordable housing. The Consolidated Plan for the City Of Steubenville (2010-2014) verifies that the local housing stock is very below standard. 95% of the housing units in Steubenville are considered substandard according to the City's Building Inspector. Almost half of both owner and renter occupied housing units are 55 years old or older. In addition the local Housing Authority is running at a 99.8% occupancy rate and the current waiting time to receive a Housing Choice voucher is 4 years. The current economic conditions continue to show that unemployment has remained higher than normal due to the closing and downsizing of several large manufacturing facilities in northeast Ohio.

Previous requests for funding for Beacon House dating back to 2004 was a request of \$214,948.00. The current request is for \$135,150 which is the same request since 2010 and only reflects an 8% increase since 2004. The Beacon House continues to produce excellent outcomes which include for the past operating year a 100% compliance with the Housing Stability goal and 93% of those served by the program maintained or increased their incomes. 100% of those tenants that left the program had one or more sources of non-cash benefits and 100% were placed in permanent housing options. The annual bed occupancy rate was 98.3%. This was only down from 100% due to pest control issues that required rooms to be vacant for treatments. In summary, the Beacon House provides great value to the local continuum's array of housing options and provides a drop-in center that allows the homeless a place to congregate, have access to showers, laundry facilities and receive case coordination from the outreach worker.

- h.** Based on the data entered in the Performance – Historical tab in OCEAN, explain any situations in which the project did not meet the appropriate entitlement or Ohio Balance of State Continuum's performance measurement's goals. Include with the explanation, the applicant's plan to reach the goals for the upcoming grant period

N/A